439 use the present tense (1)?

651 (1) The fact is actually occurring at the present time, and has motivated the canceling of the eighty percent exemption. (See p.430, note.)

The discrepancy between the officially recognized exports and imports is a sure indication that we are here approaching the truth.

The remedy for this state of things is to make Laos freely open, on equal terms and both entering and leaving, to all goods and to all merchants. It means reducing all the duties levied to the single three percent ad valorem rate both entering and leaving. It means, in a word, parity [452] with our neighbor Siam which, after having left us the land, the water and the wild beasts of the forest, will continue, unless we take care, to be the only one to profit from our colony of Laos.

It will be objected that the remedy which we recommend would not prevent the Treasury from being cheated, since foreign goods introduced into Laos might still, as is the case at present, come in through a back door into the other parts of the Indo-Chinese union. But we reply that the situation is not at all the same. The Mekong is open over more than 2000 kilometers, and there the frontier is entirely a moral one, whereas between Laos and the other lands of Indo-China there are mountainous obstacles with only a few passages, and it would be enough merely to guard these, with respect to customs, in order to prevent fraud.

[453] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRY. ARTS AND TRADES.

433 The only purpose of industry and trades in Laos is to satisfy local
•472 needs. Indeed, one cannot regard as export trade the sale of a few silk or cotton goods of Laotian origin in the nearby regions.

463 Mention must first be made of what we may call the products of family industry. With a very few exceptions, there are no specialized workers pursuing a given trade, as regards the construction of houses and the manufacture of various useful articles, hunting and fishing devices, as well as in spinning, dyeing and weaving cloth and, in a

433 word, as regards everything connected with housing, furnishings,
472 clothing, household articles, etc. Everyone--men, women and even
children-- [454] is able to make the ordinary necessary articles by
463 means of very simple methods and rudimentary tools. Thus it may be said that each house and each family represents a village in miniature.

The only industries really worthy of the name are embroidering on cloth, jewelry-making and working with gold and silver, ironmongery, brass-founding, pottery, basketry, the manufacture of certain lacquered articles, paper-making, wood and ivory carving, fresco painting, gold-washing and especially the making of pirogues, in which the natives show remarkable skill.

286 Weaving. The weaving of certain kinds of silk goods with
386 various shaded effects and often spangled with gold, as well as embroidering on cloth, is practiced by a certain number of women in every locality which is of any importance.

The looms used for weaving are extremely simple, and yet brocaded stuffs are made in which the designs are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by isolating or alternatively raising certain woof threads by means of thin strips of bamboo.

Vegetable dyes are used, that is to say that they are produced by trees or plants which grow in the country. Dyeing methods are simple, yet despite this fact the colors last for a long time thanks to a mordant composed of alum or lemon juice. The fundamental colors are blue (indigo), red, yellow and black. With the aid of these dyes the women are able, either by suitably proportioned mixtures or by various juxtapositions on the threads or on the cloth, to obtain a great variety of shades.

For some fifteen years now tinctorial powders have also been used which have an aniline base and are of German origin. But these dyes fall far short of being as colorfast and long-lasting as the local dyes. Their colors do not merge as well, and with them it is impossible to obtain the harmonious shades which the tinctorial products of Laos give to cloth and to thread.

283 [455] For spangled cloth goods and embroidery, the gold thread
286 in most widespread use is the one made by the Chinese. It consists of a strand of cotton on which a strip of paper gilded with fine gold a few tenths of a millimeter thick is wound in a spiral. Attempts have been made to introduce gold thread of European manufacture, but it has not met with favor on the part of the specialists, who have preferred the Chinese thread.